

# COP Attendance and Leaves of Absence Policy

Students are required to attend and participate in all class sessions, all didactic and lab sessions, and complete all exams, assessments, evaluations, and assignments as scheduled (together defined as “coursework”). Missed coursework has the potential to disrupt individual and team learning. However, occasionally an absence from coursework may be unavoidable. The purpose of this policy is to explain when absences will be considered excused or unexcused, the process for requesting an excused absence, the limits on absences and the procedures for requesting a Leave of Absence, as defined below. To the extent a student is required to quarantine or isolate under applicable public health guidance due to COVID-19, the University’s COVID-19 policy shall apply, and this policy will be administered in conformity with that policy.

The College of Pharmacy defines the following as:

**Excused Absence** is an absence that is approved by the COP Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) in compliance with criteria set forth in this policy. Excused absences can be requested for lectures, examinations, objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs), lab sessions, and other curricular course requirements. Students may be allowed up to a maximum of ten (10) class days total excused absences per semester, with a maximum of three (3) consecutive class days excused absence (for longer absences, see Leave of Absence section below).

**Unexcused Absence** is an absence not approved by the COP Office of Academic Affairs or when a student does not request for an excused absence. The maximum number of unexcused absences is five (5) days per semester, limited to three (3) consecutive days. Unexcused absences include absences of any type that do not involve missing examinations, OSCEs, and lab days.

**Leave of Absence** when approved is an extended absence either excused or unexcused during the didactic curriculum lasting more than three (3) consecutive class days.

## Excused Absence

Students may apply for excused absence from lectures, examinations, OSCEs, and lab sessions in the event of extenuating circumstances up to ten (10) days per semester. Some examples are listed in the table:

### May Request

Medical (*self or immediate family*)

Military Duty

Professional Leave (*requires 14-day advanced notice*)

Immigration & Naturalization

Jury Duty (*students are required to immediately report if summoned to Jury Duty to the Office of Student Affairs*)

Legal

Bereavement (*up to five days for parent, spouse/partner, or child; up to three days for all others at the discretion of the College*)

Traffic Accident (*law enforcement report required*)

### May Not Request

Car Breakdown (*call for alternative transportation*)

Work Scheduling

Professional Leave (*without required 14-day notice*)

## Excused Absence Process

The student must be able to provide documentation verifying the medical illness or emergency situation in order to be excused. Regarding weddings or similar significant events, students are encouraged to consult with the academic affair’s office and the academic calendar before planning such events.

Students are required to provide advance notice, if possible, and complete the following process to submit an excused absence:

1. A student must submit the excused absence request form to the OAA with documentation explaining the need for an absence.
2. Following receipt of the form, the OAA shall review the leave request.
3. Upon approving or denying the request, the OAA will communicate the decision to the student and course director(s) of the missed course(s).

Students are responsible for contacting their course director/ instructor for arranging review of missed materials or coursework. If the absence occurs during an assessment period (exam, quiz, OSCE, any graded activity, etc.) and is determined to be unexcused by the OAA, the student will receive a zero for the missed assessment and may be referred to the Academic Performance and Standards Committee (APSC) or to the Student Professional Conduct Review Committee (SPCRC) for review.

## Experiential Education Absence

Attendance at all clerkships and assigned activities during clerkships is mandatory. If the student needs to miss time from a clerkship, the student is required to consult with the OAA and the Office of Experiential Education. Time away from the program will be determined by the preceptors. The preceptors will determine the leave approval during the rotation as long as the student meets the required number of hours for the rotations.

## Leave of Absence Policy

Under certain circumstances, students may request a Leave of Absence (LOA) for selected reasons including but not limited to, recovering from illness, military service, or personal circumstances, etc.

## Leave of Absence Definition

*Leave of Absence (LOA)* is an extended absence either excused or unexcused during the didactic curriculum lasting more than three (3) consecutive class days. A LOA may be granted for a maximum of one year from the date the LOA is approved. An LOA may be granted for military, jury duty, maternity/paternity, or for other family reasons such as the following:

- Birth of a child, or to care or bond with a newly born child, including incapacity due to pregnancy or prenatal medical care.
- Placement of a child with the employee and/or the employee's registered domestic partner for adoption or foster care or to care or bond with the child.
- To care for a Qualified Family Member defined below, with a serious health condition.
- Because of the employee's serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform his or her job.
- A qualifying exigency related to the covered active duty or call to covered active duty of an employee's spouse, domestic partner, child or parent in the Armed Forces of the United States, as defined by law.

The University will follow applicable law for military leave.

Because courses in the College of Pharmacy curriculum are only offered one time per year and build on content from previous courses, LOAs beyond ten (10) consecutive class days generally will require students to restart the following year at the beginning of the semester they left from.

## Leave of Absence Process

A student seeking to apply for a LOA will first meet with the OAA. During this meeting the student should discuss their ability to graduate within the requirements outlined in the COP Graduation Policy. Students will be required to complete a LOA form, and the document will need to be approved and signed by the Dean and the highest-level administrator in the

Office of Financial Aid. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from providing a prior written request, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs may make exceptions to this process. Whenever practical, a student should submit their written request for a LOA at least thirty (30) calendar days in advance of the start of the upcoming semester or thirty (30) calendar days before the end of the current semester. **Non-attendance in classes does not constitute notification of intent to apply for a leave of absence.**

Students who take a LOA that, at a minimum, extends through the end of the semester shall be considered withdrawn for the purposes of grading and tuition refund only, but not withdrawn from the University. The student's final grades and tuition refunds (if any) will be processed as outlined in the Student Withdrawal Policy and Tuition Refund Policy. As an LOA has a significant impact on student loans and scholarships, the ability to obtain financial aid in the future and/or entering repayment earlier than expected, as well as possibly increasing the total cost of the student's attendance at the COP. Therefore, students should contact the Financial Aid Office about the implications related to their LOA well in advance.

Students will receive a letter via email to their CHSU email account (or, if inactive, their personal email account on file with the University) once a decision has been made regarding the LOA generally within five (5) calendar days of the decision. CHSU reserves the right to impose conditions upon the student's return that will be communicated either in the initial letter to the student approving the leave or in subsequent correspondence to the student. For example, students granted a LOA for health-related purposes may be required to have a health care professional certify in writing that they are approved to return to the University prior to the student's anticipated return date.

The Registrar's Office will send confirmation of completion of leave process to Student. The date of leave of absence status is the date that the Dean's office receives the signed Leave of Absence form, except in cases of extenuating circumstances.

Should a student wish to take a leave longer than the initial LOA granted to the student, she/he must re-apply for an additional new LOA following the same LOA process.

## Returning from a Leave of Absence

Students approved for a leave of absence may return to the COP and to classes without reapplying to the College of Pharmacy if the return is within the approved time frame as recorded in the LOA approval letter and any relevant University approved extensions of such leave. Prior to returning to the College of Pharmacy, students are required to comply with all conditions for the student's return as stated in correspondence to the student by the University. A student granted a LOA with conditions may be required to meet with the OAA before returning to the College of Pharmacy. For LOA, students must submit their intent to return in writing to the University Registrar within thirty (30) calendar days of the anticipated return to the pre-clinical portion of the curriculum and thirty (30) calendar days for the clinical curriculum, for leaves that are longer than thirty (30) days in length. It is the student's ultimate responsibility to duly inform the administration of any delays to their return or needs for further extensions.

Students failing to return to the College of Pharmacy following the approved timeframe for the LOA will be considered to be on an Unapproved Leave of Absence and may be dismissed from the College of Pharmacy.

## Unexcused Absences and Unapproved Leaves of Absence

Any student on an Unapproved LOA, or not applying for excused absence, or LOA, or LOA extension after exhausting the limit of unexcused absence days is in violation of this policy, and subject to disciplinary action under the University's codes conduct policies. Unexcused absences, taking an unapproved leave of absence, and abuse of the absence or leave request process are all examples of unprofessional conduct and violates the University's Student Conduct and Professionalism policy and Code of Ethical Conduct. Abuse of such a process includes but is not limited to:

- dishonesty regarding the need for or use of leave;
- submission of fraudulent documentation supporting the need for leave, or

- any inaccurate or misrepresented reasons provided for the leave. Abuse and/or violation of this policy may result in an appearance before the Student Professional Conduct Review Committee (SPCRC) and may lead to consequences for the student up to and including dismissal from the University.